

REMARKS

Applicants request reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the following remarks.

Claims 1 - 25 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 10, 14, 21 and 23 are the independent claims. Claims 1-13 and 21-25 are withdrawn as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

Claims 14, 15, 17, 19, and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated U.S. Patent No. 4,154,003 (Müller). Claim 16 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Müller in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,768,730 (Matsumoto et al). Claim 18 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Müller in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,274,807 (Czech). All rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 14 recites, inter alia, at least one air guide to partition an inner space of a condensing duct into a plurality of condensing paths which communicate with each other in series.

However, Applicant respectfully submits that none of the citations of record teaches at least the aforementioned feature of independent claim 14.

Müller relates to a combined drum washer and drying arrangement and teaches an arrangement that includes a liquor tank 12, and a draining system 16 or drain line 110 at a side of the tank. (Müller, FIG. 4). The arrangement also includes a water separation arrangement 77, a siphon 80, a drain line 106, or a siphon 156 attached to or in communication with the draining system 16 or the drain line 110. (Müller, FIGS. 3-5).

The Office Action contends that any of the water separation arrangement 77, the siphon 80, the drain line 106, or the siphon 156 (there being no element 155) are air guides partitioning an inner space of the draining system 16 or the drain line 110. (Office Action, page 2). Further, the Office Action contends that the aforementioned feature “merely separate structures.” (Office Action, page 4). These contentions are respectfully traversed.

Firstly, the Office Action's contention that it is correct to construe the aforementioned feature to “merely separate structures” violates the Office's own rules regarding claim interpretation. The Manual of Patent Examining Procedure makes clear that all the limitations of a claim must be considered. Thus, it is improper to construe the aforementioned feature to “merely separate structures.” Instead, even a “broad and reasonable” claim interpretation

requires consideration of the recitation separating an inner space of a condensing duct.

Secondly, the Office Action expressly confirms the Office's position that either the draining system 16 or the drain line 110 are deemed to be a condensing duct. Thus, for the current § 102 rejection of claim 14 to be proper, it is necessary for Müller to teach partitioning either the draining system 16 or the drain line 110. However, the figures of Müller variously show that each of the structures asserted in the Office Action as meeting the aforementioned feature of independent claim 14 is downstream from the draining system 16 or the drain line 110. Thus, none of the water separation arrangement 77, the siphon 80, the drain line 106, or the siphon 156 can partition an inner space of the draining system 16 or the drain line 110.

Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 are respectfully requested.

Regarding the rejections of claims 16 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103, Matsumoto et al. relates to a drum type washing machine and dryer while Czech relates to a dry cleaning machine. Matsumoto et al. is cited for its alleged teaching of an ultrasonic atomizing unit while Czech is cited for its alleged teaching of vapor absorption. Applicants respectfully submit that neither Matsumoto et al. nor Czech add anything to the teachings of Müller to remedy the aforementioned deficiency.

Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claims 16 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the independent claims patentably define the present invention over the citations of record. Further, the dependent claims should also be allowable for the same reasons as their respective base claims and further due to the additional features that they recite. Separate and individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Applicants submit that this Amendment After Final Rejection clearly places the subject application in condition for allowance. This Amendment was not earlier presented because Applicants believed that the prior Amendment placed the subject application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, entry of the instant Amendment as an earnest attempt to advance prosecution and reduce the number of issues is requested under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116.

Applicants believe that the present Amendment is responsive to each of the points raised by the Examiner in the Official Action. However, if there are any formal matters remaining after

this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to such matters.

REQUEST FOR PERSONAL INTERVIEW

Applicants believe that at least for the patentability arguments set forth herein, the pending claims patentably define the present invention over the citations of record. However, if the Office remains unconvinced, Applicants request that the Office contact the undersigned representative by telephone to arrange for a personal interview.


There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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